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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Letter dated 28 December 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Maldives to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

As you would be aware, in order to heed your request to shorten the statements and to facilitate the work of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the United Nations Hussain Shihab, did not read out the statement of the Maldives during the debate of the resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the agenda item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory", held on 20 December 2001.

Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to request you to kindly issue the attached statement as an official document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory" (see annex).

(*Signed*) Ahmed **Khaleel**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 28 December 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Maldives to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Statement by His Excellency Mr. Hussain Shihab, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives to the United Nations at the resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, on the agenda item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory", 20 December 2001, New York

The start of the Madrid peace process nearly a decade ago seemed to herald a new and hopeful era for the resolution of the question of Palestine, or so the international community thought. Hopes were high then when the international community started to witness what appeared to be the beginning of the end of Israeli occupation of Palestine. Many thought that the first steps taken at the time would lead to a process of good faith negotiations, resulting finally in the establishment of a Palestinian State, with secure borders for both Palestine and Israel. But those hopes appear to have been razed to the ground.

The international community has been witnessing an unprecedented deterioration of the situation in Palestine, fanned by a systematic policy of provocation and aggression by the Israeli Government. Much of what has been achieved over the past years has been unravelled as a result of the confrontational path chosen by the current Israeli Government.

The right of the Palestinian people to an independent State is today recognized by the entire international community. That is a reality that cannot be ignored. Israel must withdraw from all occupied Palestinian territories in accordance with all relevant Security Council resolutions. It must respect the rights of the Palestinian people living in the occupied territories. The provocative policy of unlawful seizure and destruction of Palestinian property by the Israeli armed forces must be condemned by the whole international community. The Israeli Government, through its acts of aggression and use of excessive force, political assassinations, the destruction of vital installations and infrastructure, blockades and economic suffocation of the Palestinian people, aims at frustrating the prospects of a Palestinian State. The international community cannot and should not tolerate this situation.

The path to peace in the Middle East lies solely through negotiation, as violence only breeds more violence. The current situation in the region, with a spiralling cycle of violence causing untold suffering to innocent civilians on both sides, underscores the futility of abandoning the negotiating table for the battlefield. My country also joins the international community in condemning unequivocally any and all acts of terrorism perpetrated by those individuals or groups against the peace process. The Palestinian issue has never been at a more frightening or dangerous stage, as the parties lose confidence in each other as peace partners. The international community must act, and act now, to ensure that the current escalation of violence in the region is curbed immediately. We believe that the co-sponsors of the peace process, especially the United States of America, must stay actively

engaged in the peace process and help direct the parties away from confrontation and towards cooperation.

My country has consistently supported the just struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate right to self-determination and to return to their own land from which they were driven away through occupation, as well as to the establishment of a State of their own. We believe that the provisions of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreements and the recommendations of the Mitchell report remain a credible and effective road map towards the attainment of peace for both parties, providing for the establishment of a Palestinian State and ensuring security to Israel through recognized borders. However, the implementation of these agreements depends upon genuine commitment to the agreements.

The Maldives firmly believes that the solution to the Palestinian crisis lies in the cessation of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the establishment of a Palestinian State on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. The international community must spare no efforts in guiding the parties to this goal, which would ensure peace, prosperity and the opportunity to live in dignity for all the people in the region.